

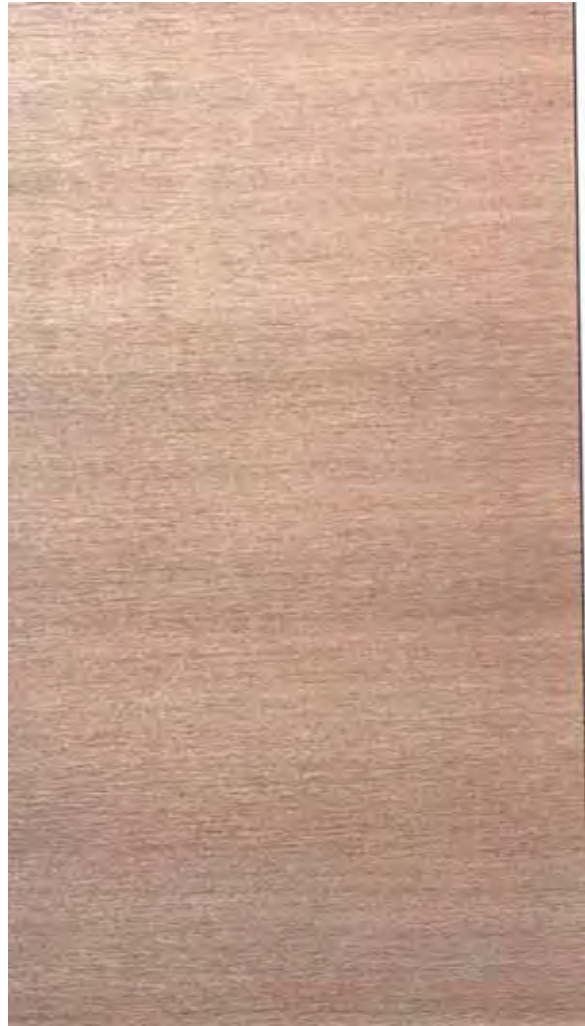
## Sweetgum

*Liquidambar styraciflua* L.

Also known as red gum, southern gum, American sweetgum and American red gum, this species may be sold as "sap gum" in the trade. Sweetgum grows in a limited range in the lowlands of the Bootheel. It grows best on deep, rich, moist soils, but will tolerate many poorer sites. It grows to a very large size on good sites.

The sapwood is a rather nondescript off-white color, frequently with a reddish tinge discolored with blue sap stain. The heartwood is reddish brown, with shades of gray and darker streaks of red or brown. The bark is light gray, smooth and thin on young trees, becoming darker and furrowed into thick plates on older trees. The wood is moderately heavy, hard, straight and close grained, usually with an interlocked grain which is often figured. It machines well, slices into veneer well and holds nails, screws and glues satisfactorily. However, it has a tendency to twist and warp and requires considerable care in drying. The growth rings are inconspicuous and the wood is diffuse porous.

Sweetgum is an excellent lumber species and is one of the most important timber trees in the U.S. It is used in a host of ways, including both rotary and vertically sliced veneer, lumber and furniture stock. Its even texture allows it to be stained or painted easily. Sweetgum may be mixed with more valuable woods such as walnut. It is also used as paneling, boxes, crates and pallets, slack cooperage, mine props, railroad ties and pulpwood. The availability in Missouri is mostly in the Bootheel area. When properly dried, it makes a good all-purpose wood for the home workshop.



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